

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ACCRA 00672 261326Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 IO-13 /075 W

-----026581 261452Z /45

P 260752Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1934

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 0672

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: SHUM, GH

SUBJ: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON GHANA

REFS: (A) STATE 019039 (B) STATE 018633

(C) ACCRA 0284 (D) ACCRA 0411

1. WE THINK OTTAWAY ARTICLE (REF B) IS GENERALLY A FAIRLY BALANCED PICTURE OF CONDITIONS IN GHANA BUT WE WOULD ARGUE AGAINST HIS ASSERTION THAT QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES IS NOW "A BURNING ISSUE" HERE. WE BELIEVE THAT WHILE GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION AND SOME ARTICULATE PROFESSIONALS DO FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT ISSUE (CHIEFLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE TROUBLE GETTING THEIR ANTI-UNION GOVERNMENT VIEWS ACROSS TO PUBLIC), VAST MASS OF CITIZENS IN GHANA REMAINS APATHETIC. HOWEVER, WE ENDORSE OTTAWAY'S CONCLUSION THAT RELATIVE TO STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, GHANA CANNOT BE DESCRIBED AS A SERIOUS OFFENDER ON THIS SCORE.

2. WHETHER 450 PRISONERS AT NSAWAN PRISON ARE REALLY POLITICAL DETAINEES OR PRIMARILY COMMON CRIMINALS REMAINS UNCLEAR. AT JANUARY 10 PRESS CONFERENCE, HEAD OF STATE DENIED THERE ARE ANY POLITICAL PRISONERS IN GHANA (REF C). AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED PRECISELY THIS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ACCRA 00672 261326Z

QUESTION AT LENGTH JANUARY 16 WITH ATTORNEY-GENERAL KORANTENG-DDOW (REF D). LATTER SAID THAT ALMOST ALL THE DETAINEES AT NSAWAM ARE HARDENED CRIMINALS WHO ARE BEING DETAINED TO PROTECT SOCIETY. HE COULD THINK, HE SAID, OF ONLY ONE OR TWO GENUINE POLITICAL PRISONERS, BOTH IMPLICATED IN A MAY 1977 COUP PLOT. WE CONSIDER THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS TELLING US WHAT

HE BELIEVED TO BE THE TRUTH. INDEED, WITHIN A DAY OR SO AFTER THE MEETING (HELD TO DISCUSS, INTER ALIA, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INQUIRY INTO CASE OF A MR. NII ASHONG), ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOWED POLOFF A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT FROM SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) INDICATING THAT ASHONG WAS BEING HELD FOR HIS ACTIVITIES IN A PURSE-SNATCHING RING, AND NOT FOR POLITICAL REASONS. IT IS OF COURSE POSSIBLE THAT ON THIS OR OTHER CASES ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY BE MISINFORMED BY SMC OR MAY NOT RECEIVE ACCURATE INFORMATION FROM POLICE OFFICIALS ON OFFENSES OF DETAINEES, BUT ON BALANCE WE DO NOT THINK HE WOULD KNOWINGLY LIE TO US.

3. AN EMBASSY OFFICER PLANS TO MEET AGAIN WITH GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT ADUMA-BOSSMAN IN NEAR FUTURE TO EXAMINE ANY EVIDENCE HE HAS THAT DETAINEES ARE ACTUALLY POLITICAL PRISONERS. ATTORNEY GENERAL TOLD US FRANKLY THAT MANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP IN OTHER PARTS OF GHANA AND LATER IMPRISONED IN ACCRA AREA; IN SOME CASES, HE SAID, PROPER AUTHORITIES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED FORMALLY AND THUS THE NECESSARY PREVENTIVE DETENTION DECREES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ISSUED. IT THEREFORE SEEMS TO US THAT WHILE SOME OF THESE PRISONERS ARE PROBABLY BEING HELD ILLEGALLY FROM A TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW (SINCE THEY ARE NOT ALL COVERED BY SPECIFIC DECREES UNDER THE PREVENTIVE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ACCRA 00672 261326Z

DETENTION ACT), THEY SHOULD NOT AUTOMATICALLY BE CONSIDERED POLITICAL PRISONERS ON THIS GROUND ALONE. IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THEIR IRREGULAR STATUS MAY BE DUE TO ADMINISTRATIVE INEFFICIENCY. ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THAT APPROXIMATELY 200 OF THE PRISONERS WILL BE RELEASED SHORTLY, AFTER HAVING BEEN HELD FOR SOME YEARS AND HOPEFULLY REFORMED. SMITH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978ACCRA00672  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780038-1264  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** ACCRA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780122/aaaaaruj.tel  
**Line Count:** 101  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 184c09e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 STATE 19039, 78 STATE 18633, 78 ACCRA 284, 78 ACCRA 411  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3713227  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON GHANA  
**TAGS:** SHUM, SOPN, GH  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/184c09e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014